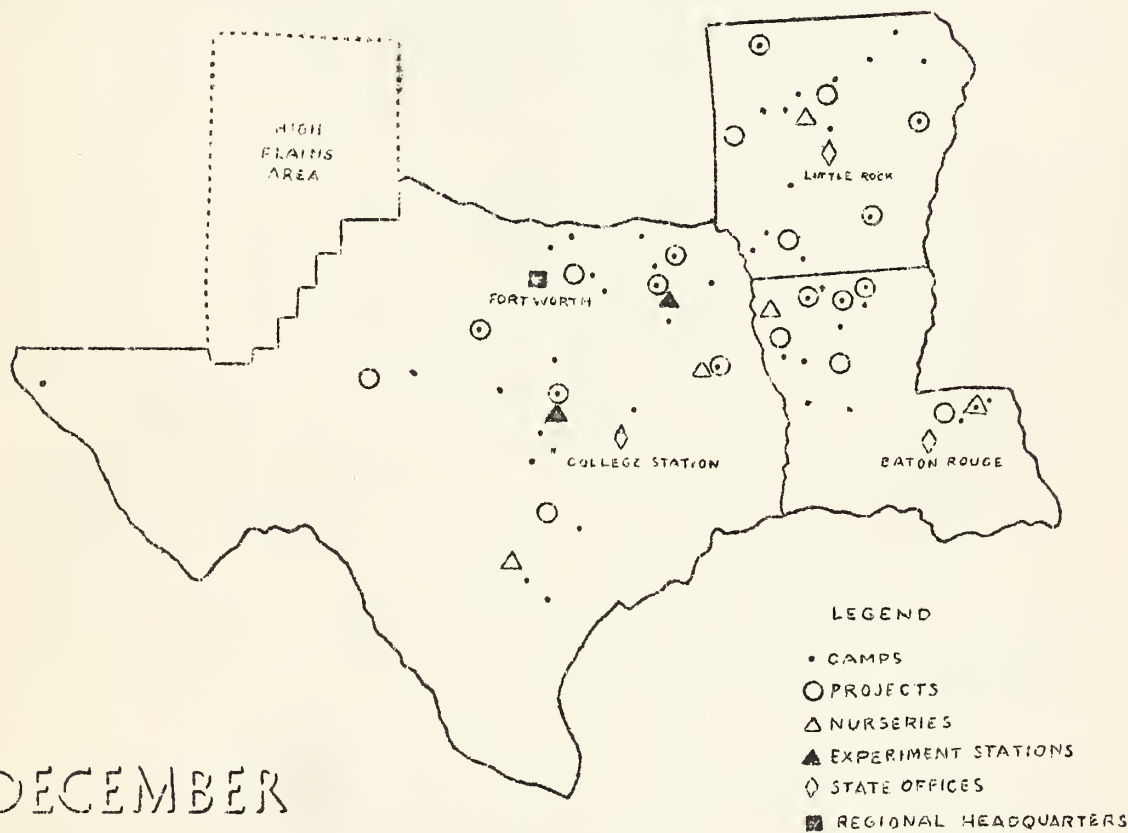


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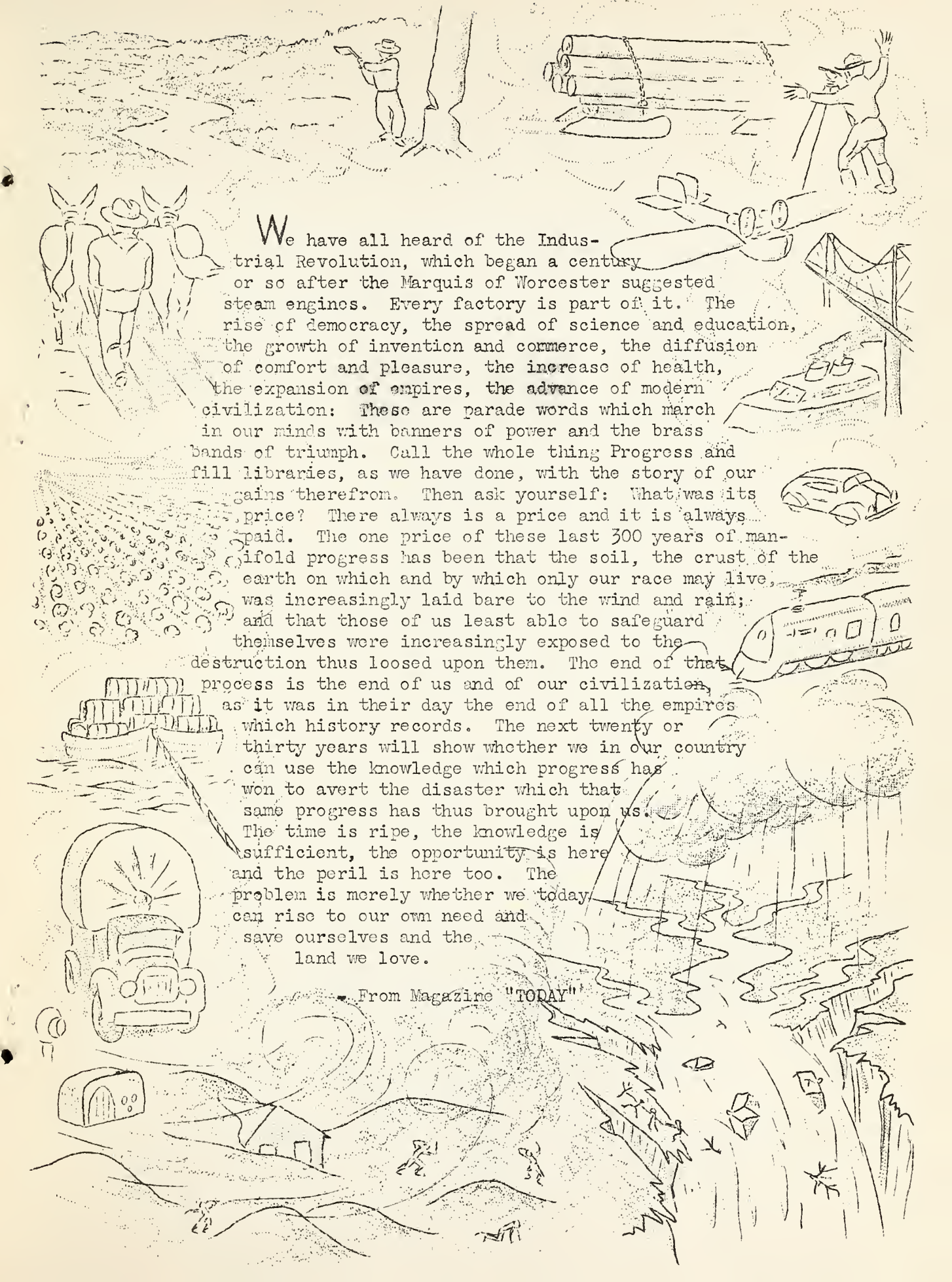
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

NEWS



DECEMBER

REGION 4
COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA
ARKANSAS AND TEXAS, EXCEPT
HIGH PLAINS AREA



We have all heard of the Industrial Revolution, which began a century or so after the Marquis of Worcester suggested steam engines. Every factory is part of it. The rise of democracy, the spread of science and education, the growth of invention and commerce, the diffusion of comfort and pleasure, the increase of health, the expansion of empires, the advance of modern civilization: These are parade words which march in our minds with banners of power and the brass bands of triumph. Call the whole thing Progress and fill libraries, as we have done, with the story of our gains therefrom. Then ask yourself: What was its price? There always is a price and it is always paid. The one price of these last 300 years of manifold progress has been that the soil, the crust of the earth on which and by which only our race may live, was increasingly laid bare to the wind and rain; and that those of us least able to safeguard themselves were increasingly exposed to the destruction thus loosed upon them. The end of that process is the end of us and of our civilization, as it was in their day the end of all the empires which history records. The next twenty or thirty years will show whether we in our country can use the knowledge which progress has won to avert the disaster which that same progress has thus brought upon us. The time is ripe, the knowledge is sufficient, the opportunity is here and the peril is here too. The problem is merely whether we today can rise to our own need and save ourselves and the land we love.

From Magazine "TODAY"

PLANTING TIME OF NATIVE GRASSES

By

Simon E. Wolff, Agronomist, Regional Office

The following species of native grasses are listed as meadow grasses in the Agronomy Manual of Region 4:

1. *Panicum anceps*
2. *Paspalum circulare*
3. *Panicum virgatum* (Switchgrass)
4. *Bouteloua gracilis* (Blue grama)
5. *Bouteloua hirsuta* (Hairy grama)
6. *Bouteloua rigidiseta* (Texas grama)
7. *Hilaria belangeri* (Curly mesquite)
8. *Hilaria nutica* (Tobosa)
9. *Andropogon furcatus* (Big bluestem)
10. *Andropogon hallii* (Hall bluestem)
11. *Andropogon saccharoides* (Beardgrass)
12. *Andropogon scoparius* (Little bluestem)
13. *Bouteloua curtipendula* (Side-oats grama)
14. *Sorghastrum nutans* (Indian grass)
15. *Sporobolus asper hookeri* (Dropseed)

The first two species are confined to Eastern Louisiana and Arkansas and are important in certain natural wet meadows and meadow outlets along with several other species. They can well be used in establishing new meadow outlets. Both produce seed in the summer and fall and until frost. The logical time to plant them is from February 15 to April 15. The young seedlings then will be well established before drouth periods arrive.

Switchgrass is a tall grass that grows under conditions similar to the first two species but has a much wider distribution. It is found naturally along stream bottoms and bottom land meadows as well as in drier situations and on uplands. Seeds are produced in abundance in the latter half of September and early October. Germination records in the laboratory and field indicate that two year old seed have a higher germination than new seed. Under rather dry conditions at the San Antonio Nursery, two year old seed produced a good stand. The nurseries of the Region have only a limited amount of one year old seed for distribution. These should be planted in proposed meadow outlets during March and April.

Blue grama, hairy grama, Texas grama, curly mesquite and tobosa are under trial at various points. All are typical pasture grasses and should not be considered for meadow plantings. All grow naturally in certain

climatic regions of Texas, but only the blue grama is available for planting purposes, and can be substituted for the others which have been requested from different projects and camps. Blue grama is usually ripe in August but has been known to produce two crops of seed and where rainfall is late may produce a crop in late autumn. It will germinate quickly when given sufficient moisture and is adapted to both heavy and sandy soils. Plantings from February 15 to April 15 may be expected to give uniformly good results. Soil temperatures and drouth would be the limiting factors affecting survival after April and until early fall.

The last seven species which include the four Andropogons, side-oats grama, Indian grass and dropseed are adapted to prairie conditions, and are found most frequently in Texas, west of the timber country. However, enough natural and artificial plantings have been observed to indicate that all will grow in sandy soils of Louisiana and Arkansas when protected from competition with woody vegetation. All, except beardgrass, which is of little value as a meadow grass, produce their seeds in summer and autumn and even until freezing weather occurs.

The best time to plant these tall grasses is in early spring from February 15 to April 10, or as early as February 1. Rainfall and soil moisture and temperature should be considered when plantings are made after April 10. The plants should be well established before the hot dry periods arrive. Fall planting is a questionable practice unless conditions are very favorable for quick emergence, growth and protection. If a fall and winter nurse crop is used to protect against erosion until the young plants are well established, then fall and winter plantings can be made. But with a nurse crop, the late winter and early spring plantings should show the best germination and survival.

Of the last seven in the list only the seeds of little bluestem are available in quantities and the Nursery Section expects to furnish full requirements of the projects and camps in the Region.

FARMERS SHOULD LEARN GOPHER CONTROL METHODS

by

Homer G. Towns
Regional Biologist

Man in his struggle for existence upon the earth must combat with the forces of nature. In fact, man is directly dependent upon and his success can be determined by his ability to control the forces of nature. Many of the things that exist in nature can be utilized by man either directly or indirectly in his struggle for success in the world. There are some, however, which seemingly cannot be made to produce anything except detrimental results. The pocket gopher is a little animal which has not as yet proved

very helpful to man. In fact, the gophers can prove very detrimental to a system of terraces, an outlet channel, a meadow strip, or some of the other applied measures of erosion control. For this reason man should make an effort to control these animals in areas where the infestation is intense enough to cause much damage to erosion control practices.

The simplest and most satisfactory method of controlling pocket gophers is to poison them with strychnine alkaloid sprinkled over small pieces of freshly cut sweet potatoes.

The Soil Conservation Service has in the past and will for at least this fiscal year furnish the strychnine, the labor, materials and transportation to try to completely eradicate the pocket gophers on farms under cooperative agreement with the Service.

Complete eradication of gophers on a farm or on several adjoining farms does not mean that these places will always be free from these animals. In fact, many places where almost complete eradication was accomplished last year the infestation is reported as being fifty percent as heavy as it was before the work was started. In other words, the farmers who live in the gopher infested areas of the country will have to continuously keep after these animals if they expect to be free from the damage that they are capable of causing.

If we consider the above statement as being true, then the Soil Conservation Service should not poison the gophers on a single farm unless the cooperator will become an active partner in the actual poisoning operations.

During this fiscal year in Region 4 approximately 150,000 acres will be poisoned, comprising about 2000 farmers. If each of these cooperators would learn how to actually do poisoning work, including mixing the bait and the procedure for distributing the poison, and was then encouraged to pass that information on to his neighbors, he would not only be able to keep down the gopher infestation on his own farm, but would also greatly reduce the possibility of reinfestation.

Fifty cents worth of strychnine would probably be enough to keep down pocket gopher reinfestation on a hundred acre farm for from two to five years, after an effort was made to completely eradicate these animals one year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Twenty-six miles of terrace lines on farms in the Bogata Camp area were stripped with oats in the fall and winter of 1935-36 and the terraces built in the late spring and early summer while other crops were still growing.

Again this year the farmers in this camp area are taking advantage of this method of protecting their land with strip crops during the winter season and building terraces during the dry summer months. Seventeen miles of terrace lines have been run this fall and oats planted. By using this method the farmers may terrace their land at the best time of the year with the minimum amount of damage to the growing crops, since the area in strip crops is sufficiently wide to allow for turning.

Another most important advantage of fall stripping of terrace lines in preparation for summer terracing is that the farmer may locate his terrace outlets and establish any protection needed before building the terraces. This does away with any damage which might result from emptying terrace water on newly constructed outlets.

--- From Texas Project 9,
Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

HELPING NON-COOPERATORS

In planning your crop layout for the coming season we again urge you not to lose sight of the importance and value attached to the practice of using all close growing crops such as grain sorghums, small grains, millet and sweet sorghums in strips with the terrace system. The planting of these feed crops in strips will by far offset the additional trouble in harvesting by saving in labor on the terrace maintenance. Regardless of the amount of such feed crops planted, plant them in strips and take advantage of the maintenance problem and secure this additional erosion protection.

If for any reason you may not thoroughly understand the approved and recommended plans for strip cropping in connection with terracing, we invite you to come to the Soil Conservation Service office at your earliest convenience and let us help you make your plans to take advantage of this opportunity you have to control erosion at the least possible cost on your farm.

--- From Texas Project 1,
Temple, Texas.

MOVES HOUSE TO GET BETTER FARM PLAN

"Believe me," says Mr. W. A. Randig, SCS cooperator living near Pflugerville, "in order to save my soil I am willing to completely reorganize my farm operations."

Mr. Randig moved and rebuilt his home near the center of his farm so as to fit his farm program with the conservation operations as planned by the Technical Staff of the Pflugerville Camp, SCS-T-6. The new location of his farmstead permits the terracing of cultivated fields and the use of more suitable outlets which would not have been possible with the farmstead in the old location.

"You know, now I can utilize the waste land down through the draw for pasture and I will not have to keep up a lot of unnecessary fences to do it. Its a lot cheaper for me to move my house than for erosion to remove my farm."

-- Texas Project 4,
Lockhart, Texas.

COOPERATORS SPEAK

"I will not have to spend a month of each year rebuilding my terraces. The steep land has gone back to pasture and forest where it belongs."

-- David Bass, Cooperator,
Texas Project 7,
Nacogdoches, Texas.

"My pasture with the contour ridging is in the best shape it has ever been in. Strip crops are doing a good job of saving my upland soil.

"The diversion terraces have increased the value of my bottom land ten times its former value.

"I think the Soil Conservation Service program is very practical for the farmer in this country. I hope every business man and farmer can go down on my farm and see the soil conservation plan being put into operation."

-- Aaron B. Cox, Cooperator,
Texas Project 7,
Nacogdoches, Texas.

LEARNS A LESSON

"The quicker we can get the people educated on the right way to farm the land, the quicker I can rent my land," said Eagle Starkoy, of the Harrison ECW Camp area. "I want my land contour cultivated, and I don't want to rent it out until I get a renter who will agree to contour cultivate it.

"Last year," he continued, "we contoured a field and strip cropped it. Water could not get down to former washes when we had those heavy rains this fall. And it is much easier to contour cultivate too. It is about one-third easier on the team when you are plowing, because the team does not have to pull up hill - they just walk on the same level all the time. When it comes to gathering the crop," he continued, "why, it saves both man and team, because you can speak to the team and keep them moving as you want to. On a contour cultivated field the team can handle the wagon, and a man can gather from one-fourth to one-third more corn a day than when he does it the other way.

"And look what it does to your land. It keeps it all built up and in lots better shape, because the moisture just soaks into the field instead of running off and taking your soil with it. Persons who have not tried contour cultivation do not realize how many tons of soil they lose during the year. I had a field that had been in meadow for four years and we plowed it up for corn, in long straight rows. That was two years ago, and I'll bet we lost over a hundred tons of soil in the spring rains. The work of four years to build up that field went in one rain - the very best soil that I had, too.

"If we can get farmers to realize how important it is, and how much better, if they will just once start practicing contour cultivation, we on the farm will come out on top. But if we continue the way we are now, we will just get poorer and poorer."

--- Arkansas Project 3,
Harrison, Arkansas.

"Before the Soil Conservation Service work was done on my farm, I would have sold it for \$15.00 per acre. Today I value it at \$45.00 per acre, and it is not for sale. I know now that my soil will not be washed away, and I can work with more encouragement. My farm is much easier to operate with all the rows on the contour."

--- Arkansas Project 5,
Hope, Arkansas.

MASTER FARMERS CONSERVE SOIL

Camp SCS-Ark-17 has among its list of cooperators three farmers who have won outstanding honors for their agricultural achievements.

Mr. B. C. Balch, Morrilton, Arkansas was chosen as one of the Master Farmers of Arkansas in 1933. He is engaged in the dairy business and has accomplished marvelous results by the use of bermuda grass, dallis grass and clovers on a badly eroded hillside farm.

Toney Poladino, Centor Ridge, Arkansas is another cooperator to attain high honors. He was given first place in the "Plant to Prosper Program" in Conway County in 1935. Mr. Poladino's success has been principally one of soil conserving by mechanical means.

Clem F. Kaufman, Hattiesville, Arkansas is the other cooperator to be a winner. He was recently selected as first in the "Plant to Prosper Program" for Conway County.

Within the past ten years the Kaufman farm has been developed from a badly eroded non-productive condition into a highly specialized farm through the application of good soil conservation practices most important being development of meadow strips, wide and intelligent use of bermuda grass and terracing.

-- Arkansas Project #1,
Conway, Arkansas.

TWO ACRES FOR ONE

A standing offer has been made by one of our Cooperators of two acres of farm land outside the Project Area for one acre of farm land of the same slope and soil types inside the Area. So far there have been no takers of this offer.

This Cooperator, a man of sound business judgment and a large landowner, is basing this offer on the hypothesis that the soil conservation practices on the farms in the Area have increased their immediate value 100 percent.

-- Arkansas Project #6,
Waldron, Arkansas.

FARMER DEVEREAUX

A mid-south farmer was honored with a visit from Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, Administrator Tugwell and other high federal officials the other day. He is Steve Devereaux of Crowley Ridge, near Forrest City, Arkansas.

There was a good reason. Mr. Devereaux is cooperating effectively with the Soil Conservation Service. A gully has been plowed out and replaced with a meadow gently curving down toward the center, but with no perceptible stream bed. The water gently funs off without carrying soil with it.

He has alternated 75 feet of cotton with 25 feet of lespedeza. Soil may wash out of the cotton, but much of it is caught and held when it reaches the lespedeza. Only such measures, strictly adhered to, can save Crowley's Ridge. Mr. Devereaux and others who do as he is doing are patriots. For he who saves the soil saves his country. -- Editorial in Memphis Press Scimitar.

--- Arkansas Project 2,
Forrest City, Arkansas.

FARMERS COOPERATE IN FIRE PROTECTION

The farmers in the Protty Creek Watershed deserve a great deal of credit for their aid in preventing forest and grass fires during the severe dry weather this fall.

At this same date of last year the acreage burned within the watershed area was in excess of a thousand acres. The rainfall over this same period of 1935 was much in excess of that for 1936.

During the past two weeks five fires have been reported to project headquarters and in each instance men were dispatched to put them out. These five fires burned a total of 236.0 acres; 191.0 acres were outside the watershed boundary and 45.0 acres within the watershed limits. It is also interesting to note that of the 236.0 acres reported, only .2 of an acre burned was on land under cooperative agreement.

While commending the farmers within the watershed area on their cooperation in fire protection, it might be well to add that on two occasions Mr. G. V. Nest Foster, landowner outside of the watershed area, was called upon to render aid in fire fighting. On both occasions Mr. Foster dispatched 12 to 15 men immediately. These fires were not on land owned by Mr. Foster. Such cooperation deserves mention.

--- Louisiana Project 3,
Clinton, Louisiana.

ENROLLEES LEARN SOIL CONSERVATION

Superintendent Harry H. Talton of the Minden ECW Camp has been conducting a volunteer class in Soil Conservation practices. The enrollees have been unusually responsive in their attendance and have shown much interest in the work. The following is the prize winning letter in a recent contest conducted by Mr. Talton:

Dear Mr. Talton:

Before enrolling in the CCC I know very little about the Soil Conservation Service and its program. Even though I was born and reared on a farm I have received more training and learned more about soil conservation in the four months that I've been an ECW enrollee than I learned all the rest of my life on the farm.

Not long after I had been in the camp I was put on the mapping crew. While working out there drawing maps I learned enough about farm mapping to realize that every farmer should know more about the physical features of his farm before attempting to plan a soil conservation program. A farm map is a map showing the physical features of a farm, including the drainage, terraces, crop boundaries, houses and fences.

Immediately after enrolling in the camp I started taking a class in Soil Conservation. In this class we are doing the practical work as well as studying bulletins and other material on soil conservation. The first thing I learned to do was level an instrument and read a rod. After I had learned to do that I began to run terrace lines. Now with what experience I've had I could go back home and borrow a level and rod and terrace my father's farm.

I could also show him how strip crops prevent erosion and also protect the channels of his terraces from silting...

Terracing is only one of many things included in the Soil Conservation Service program. Even though I haven't had any practical experience in gully control I have learned how to control them through the study in our soil conservation class. I've learned that the most important thing to do is divert as much of the water as possible out of gullies. This can be done by contour ridges and earth fills. The next thing to do if you can't divert the water . . . is to build temporary check dams across them. This can be done by getting some poles or wire and build pole or wire dams. It can be done at very low cost. After you have built the dams the next thing to do is plow the banks down and sod them with Bermuda grass. Then plant the banks to an erosion resisting crop . . . The dams will hold the water back until the gully is well sodded with grass.

I know of two or three gullies on my father's farm that with a little time and very little cost can be stopped from washing. Next time I go home I will show him how easily they can be stopped.

With all these things I've learned since I've been an ECW enrollee I believe I could take my father's farm and make a profitable one out of it.

-- E. L. Westbrook, Enrollee.

A COOPERATOR SPEAKS

"RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE"

By

T.W.Shields, Sec'y-Treas.,
Lincoln Parish Soil Conservation Association.

With the coming of December comes the end of the harvest season, the time of taking an inventory of goods on hand, the planning of another year's work. Seated before the low burning fire at night the farmer with his companion of life review with a certain scrutiny, each good and bad venture of the now ending year. The terracing of certain fields, planning of suitable crops, notable results or failures, and the margin of possible conservation to be found. Coming into this reckoning as never before is the potent fact of saving for their loved ones the priceless legacy in the way of soil which has come to be theirs in better days now gone. No more striking or estimable thought or plan can pervade the realm of study possessed by anyone than this: To leave for another a treasure in the way of a bit of home upon which care has been bestowed to the extent of preserving in usable condition this rich heritage of a few inches of well managed top soil. Despite the fact of this bank roll only being some ten or twelve inches in depth it is all they have or all they can leave for loved ones.

Now with these facts before us let us plan for 1937 not only to produce the most possible, but to leave added values to God's rich gift intrusted to our care. Astronomical conditions now point toward another dry year during which time each drop of water will be needed. Of course this condition may not materialize yet it bids fair to happen. To meet this situation, one that has prevailed for some years, each farmer should bend every energy to holding moisture with top soil on his farm so as to make them available for the strain of drought which may come. Most happy is he who plans and works for present needs, restores past losses, and aids in building for future demands.

Being one of the first Cooperators in the Cypress Creek Watershed, it is one of my great joys to urge with word or deed, others to avail themselves of this service which has without contradiction brought the most lasting and most commendable service ever received by farmers in any previous age.

10- South Bldg



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
REGION 4

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